



Idylls
and POEMS *

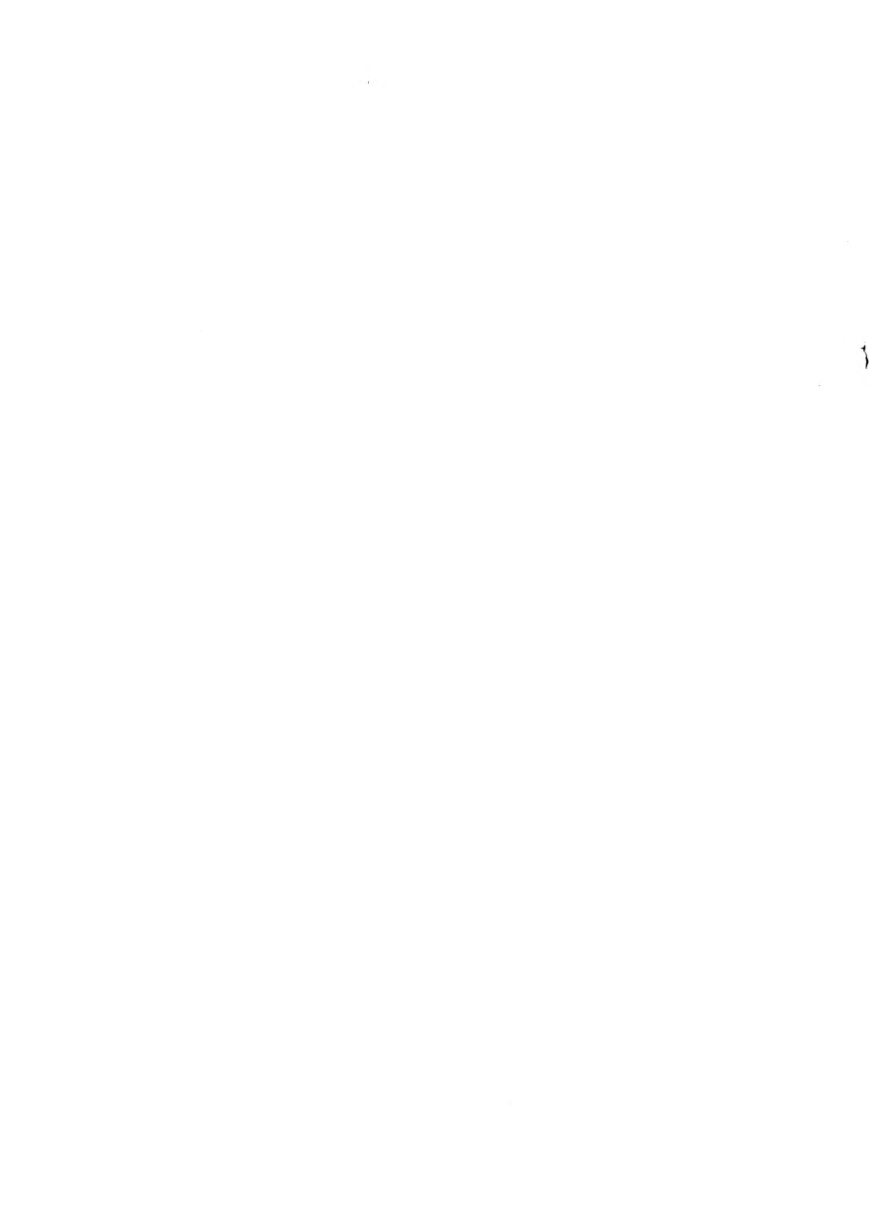


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IDYLLS AND POEMS.

IDYLLS AND POEMS

BY

ANNA MARIA FAY

*Siqui forte mearum ineptiarum
Lectores eritis—*


NEW YORK
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DEDICATION.

WO sponsors have decreed my little book.
With one, it is but now just afternoon ;
He rests, that on his harvest he may look :

“ My binded grain were safely garnered soon.”
The flush of joy is on his toiling face ;
Again he looks : “ One stalk is left unhewn ;

Among my golden sheaves it has a place.”
The other has a glowing noon before,
And with the climbing sun she shines apace.

“ The fields,” quoth she, “ now teem with waiting
store,
And from its fulness many a bird doth sing ;
I would my kindred nest might add one more.”

EASTER, 1879.

THE PILGRIM PAIR.

AN IDYLL.

GOD is ever drawing like to like and making them acquainted.


—Then the true lover and not the counterfeit must be loved by his love.

The Lysis of Plato.

—Whereas the love of the noble mind, which is in union with the unchangeable, is everlasting.

The Symposium of Plato.

Jowett's translation.

HEN bounteous Nature wears her fresh array,
She guards with tender hand the firstling
flowers

And fruits, which haste to make their sweet display ;

She decks the waking wood with lustrous bowers
Of bloom, and sprinkles all the sward with
showers

Of glistening crystals from a cloudless sky.

Her prime has promise yet of costlier dowers.

Let all who love her mysteries, reverently
Approach with pious hearts and pure her altars high.

Such time a youth did wend his joyous way,
To gain a neighboring height, whence he descries
A land all virginal to his survey,
Whose alien charm invites his young emprise ;
For where the hillside ends, there greets his eyes
A sylvan vale, and there a brooding cloud
Trails now a scarf-like shadow in soft wise
Across ; beyond with meadows rich endowed,
A river winds, outglancing from a vapory shroud.

He fronts full-faced the fresh uprisen sun
That lights to flame a crown of auburn hair ;
Tremulous waves of manly blood o'errun,
The comely face gloried with orient air ;
His eyes are sapphire unsurpassed—as rare
Their clear, frank gaze, their sweet and radiant
 smile,
Caught by the lips within the golden lair
Of couchant wiles ; and now he stands awhile
In sculptured grace and looks o'er many a verdured
 mile.

Lured by the welcome scene, he soon descends
A shelving path, and as his singing heart
Attunes his steps, the music faintly blends
With harmonies that circle every part
Of earth's full life ; responsive birds too start
Melodious strains, and all the willing air
Rolls on the song that fills his youthful heart ;
What more a dædal art might rashly dare
Finds here a voice and doth e'en added beauties
wear.

Thus gayly enters he the shadowed grove,
Yet shadow none he sees. The sobered light
Wins a fresh glory from the trees, that love
'Mid leafy depths to bloom in silvery white ;
The plummy fern poises for lowly flight,
And soft winds frolic with the dewy plant ;
And through the wood a brook beguiles his
sight,
The spherèd morn sends oft his beams aslant,
To fleck its pebbly floor, its waves a gladness grant.

He lies outstretched upon its mossy bank,
Lulled by the murmuring sounds, and in the
stream,
He idly views the wanton sport and crank
Of finny game, that here as fearless seem,
As they had won from him a friend's esteem.
At length there comes a strangely sudden freak ;
Awakened late he starts from vagrant dream ;
Now turns that he some purpose new may wreak,
Then moves perplexed where led a hidden thing to
seek.

Behold ! full near within a leafy screen
A maid appears. She stands in reverie still,
By a shrine-like tree upborne and rapt, I ween,
In thoughts an oft-perused page doth fill,
Tempting the glancing sun's celestial skill,
To gild her pale gold hair more goldenly.
But he restrains his ardent ray until
Her face's form he carves so beauteously,
Against its emerald depths as there for aye to be.

Anon the kindling beam touches her cheek,
Orbed like a moon that pearly mists o'erspread,
Glides o'er the fibrous cloud her robe, to seek
Those lines that down her matchless limbs
 would lead,
Though dim revealed; still bent is she to read
What has been said by the dear Master sage :
When heaven a soul has there disseverèd,
The parted mates meet here on this rude stage,
That Love may win the plumes for their home pil-
grimage.

While she doth these strange words impórtune
 read,
Intrusive notes arouse her slumbering ear ;
She lifts her luminous fair face to heed
What means an irksome noise thus drawing near.
Her unexpectant eyes startle with gentle fear
Before the radiant youth, but changing thought
Soon lights in them a benediction dear ;
He bends as to familiar presence brought,
He knows not why; and she a kindred look has caught.

Like a pale bud that hides a rosy hue
Deep in its folded core, and garners there
An essence pure amid still globes of dew,
So in her heart a blush is unaware
Close pent with unwept tears, that blameless
 spare
The sunlit cheek ; meantime his glowing face
Hastes all his heart's fresh joyaunce to declare ;
His eyes, alert to catch her every grace,
Are fixed where her sweet form all other sights dis-
 place,

Until a nearing peal of choral sound.
Allures his deep enraptured look to dwell
Where'er the silence breaks in mirth around ;
The maiden then is freed from his dear spell.
As when a bark that wind and tide impel
Afresh, nor far a wished-for port describes,
Stays not awhile of its rich freight to tell,
So she too treads the path that near her lies,
And softly veils the azure of her wistful eyes.

As fair she wends along the charmèd vale,
The pathway trees dispose their lines to meet
And frame her gracious shape, the brook doth
fail

Its murmurings to time her rhythmic feet,
And in her praise the feathery choirs compete.
The youth would fain a captive mood dispel,
To follow her in some glad way discreet,
When lo ! as listening stillness holds the dell,
A song rings out, in semblance of a singing bell :

*Sweet life afar and plumes akin
To hers who loves thee true;
Care not for earth's mad joys and din;
For her bid all adieu.*

*Sweet life afar and wings to waft
With her who loves thee dear ;
There waits the swift sea-faring craft,
And she across to steer.*

When dies the song in Echo's farthest cave,
The maiden meets the tryst of wood and sky.
"What ! earthly joys and weal I may not have,
It sings—must I for her such fate defy ?
Ah woful choice ! " he cries and breathes a sigh.
Herewith a burst of noisy revelry,
His prisoned thought invades with victor cry ;
Full many dazzling charms fling flauntingly
Their banner in his sight, along with this pert min-
strely.

Nor strange that Nature's modest light should
flee,
And cloak itself with shade, that airy choir
And harmless creatures' sport should silenced be,
When Pleasure's giddy followers conspire
To invade her sacred haunts in gay attire.
The jocund throng, which instant fill the wood,
Are willing slaves to measureless desire,
And one, who stirs with thirst their youthful
blood,
Leads here the rout enrobed in radiant womanhood.

If one should seize a mermaid's store of pearls,
Should steal the crystal web where Iris paints
Her bow, and fusing both with foamy curls
Of crested wave, mould thus by dextrous feints
A shape to match the cup of pilgrim saints,
He would the pattern rare of that high car
Display, whose sumptuous burthen first attaints
The youth's sad gaze ; two steeds that rivals are
Of snowy swan, draw blazing bright the orient star,

Whose dazzling glare chases the lingering ray
Of yon sweet vanished moon, whereby the wood,
The dear deserted bower, the vernal day,
Are lurid with the glow of her gay mood :
A weird inconstant soul appears to brood
In her dark eyes, which fitful give a glance,
Now soft, now suiting some fresh attitude ;
A darting, gilded beam they throw askance,
Like altering beacon-lights that warn of dire mis-
chance.

A coronal of dusky burnished hair
Above a smooth broad brow doth jewelled rise ;
The wedded charm of rose and lily rare
Graces her cheek, until the rose outdies
At her lithe throat, and leaves the lily there
To meet a shimmering robe of aspen green,
That clothes her sinuous form as native wear ;
Bright gems gleam here and there with various
 sheen,
And change makes all the history of this frail Queen.

She rises in her chariot to greet
The stranger youth, and showers a sparkling smile
From lips so ripened red, although unsweet,
Upon his lifted face, and all the while
Her artful company would more beguile
The charmèd prey, and o'er him lightly fling
Bewilderment, that he in witchèd style
Is led, though still the peerless maid remember-
 ing ;
Meanwhile in mimic notes the Siren bold did sing :

*Sweet life is here, with joys akin
To hers who loves thee true;
Nor weal nor wealth nor earth's gay din
For her need'st bid adieu.*

*Sweet life is here, and winds to waft
With her who loves thee dear;
Here plies the pleasure laden craft,
And she within to steer.*

O riven soul ! O sadly tempted heart !
What devious way may now thy steps be led,
Unsheltered from the Siren's magic art !
Haste, heavenly maid ! the flowery bondage
dread
Quick break, and lead him to thy bourne instead.
O shade, that like a pall creep'st o'er the ground,
Enwrap him in thy folds as he were dead :
Come, plant thy valiant legions close around,
All tender earth, and guard him in thy depths profound.

Weep, weep indeed, thou tearful morning cloud ;
Shroud all thy bloom, henceforth, sweet spring-
time bower ;
And thou, fond brook, make thy soft complaints aloud ;
He yields his heart to pleasure's baleful power,
Nor victory earns in this the fated hour.
No more with lowly wing the fern doth soar,
Nor vernal wood break joyous forth in flower ;
No more the fragrant air breathes softly o'er
The glade; the vale with music sounds no more, no
more.
They leave the haunted sylvan gloom behind ;
They break into the garish day along
The summer fields, in golden garlands bind
The ripening corn, and all the festive throng
Wave high aloft their wreaths in dance and song,
And gayly crown with cheers their beauteous
queen.
The youth in manhood's prime grown trusty, strong
Guides well the troop through pleasant paths
serene,
To where the meadow meets the river's margent green.

Here rests full trimmed the royal pleasure boat
Waiting its happy crew ; the earth's full store,
The skilful arts are brought, with them to float
In lavish wealth adown the fruitful shore ;
The Queen beside the prow a guiding oar
Has touched, and all the airy caves resound
With rapturous shouts ; they softly glide before
The willing breeze ; they leave the homely
ground,
And softly glide with sweetly cadenced waves around.

They pass rich meads 'neath summer rays aglow ;
Sail now into the river's widening bay ;
By towns and loved abodes they onward go,
Where all the shores with cheerful scenes are
gay ;
The watery mirror aids the bright display.
The Siren sits as goddess of the stream,
And spins the splendid hours ; with these a lay
She weaves of wizard lore or love's fair dream,
Until their glorious joys an endless vista seem.

At length across this tissue deftly wrought,
A being moves, so still, so shadowy fair,
That none, save one, the wraith-like gleam has
caught.

At the Enchantress' feet, a captive there,
He hears low sounds now beat upon the air,
That say, "Care not for earth's mad joys and
din."

Then he, who of the words is sole aware,
Sees the dear phantom pass, in look akin
Unto a lily with its petals closed in.

Henceforth the splendors of the day grow pale
'Neath sorrow's cloud; he would arrest the shade,
Fain with blind tears her vanished sight bewail,
By any toil and vows the lily maid
Regain, were not a tribute on him laid
By the tyrannic Queen, whose knight is he.
She sees by his far gaze her thraldom fade,
Then sings of love and its felicity,
Thrilling her fervid lay with sweetest witchery:

*Wouldst thou but lead me, my true knight,
To love's sequestered bower,
There we should joy in soft delight,
And love would wing the hour.*

*The changeful winds are constant there,
Nor wanes the moon's round face;
The sleepless stars reflect love's air,
The very stones its grace.*

*And I should be thine own, my knight,
Thy Queen, thy handmaid fair;
All beauteous scenes should charm thy sight,
And I thy rapture share.*

*Come, lead me, claim me, love, my king;
Rich gems thy brow shall crown,
The world shall with thy splendor ring,
If thou wilt be mine own.*

Of old the river flows from cloud-girt height,
And calm and free his regal way doth make ;
But when he deigns to prove his treasured might,
Shuts all his waves within a fortified lake,
Till through its walls a seaward path they break,
Let but a tempest stand as sentinel,
And sound his warning there, quickly men wake
To misery who hear the fatal knell
With spreading sail and pass the dreaded citadel

Hence when the Queen and her pale band do
face
The buttressed port, now fierce the winds arise,
With mighty scourge lash on the boat apace.
For them no turn, no 'scape in their surprise ;
The rampart rude and strong around them lies,
And lofty cliffs shut out the cheerful light ;
Ensanguined hues clothe soon in wild disguise
The mazy woods, which here and there unite
The frowning heights and friendly paths enclose
from sight.

Full soon the black and flying clouds descend
On vengeful wing ; the waters feel their gloom.
A lurid glare, and then a crash that seems to rend
The earth ; and evil portents woful loom
Above, around, and hurry on the doom ;
The changeful lights about the Queen depart,
And ashen gray and pallor fill their room ;
In dumb affright and haste they shoreward start ;
For thoughts of self and safety crowd each panting
heart.

Anon the clouds outpour, and fright them back ;
The bark is roughly driven to and fro.
And yet one dauntless heart they do not lack—
One soul the Siren did not all undo—
He still is strong to help them in their woe ;
No more he wears the look of favored ease,
No more the wearied face, the voice grown low
With slackened pulse ; his glance is quick to seize
Each risk and with brave hope the horrid ills
appease.

Calm as the deep below the plunging keel,
Firm as the hills that gird the dismal shore,
True as a shield well proved of knightly steel,
He takes the helm; his voice outshrills the roar
Of wind and waves, to give them hope once more;
But hope alas! is none—all—all is lost;
A flash—a fearful sound—a poured out store
Of wrath—the boat amongst the rocks now tost—
They flee—they drown—the Queen has vanished
like a ghost.

The shattered bark adrift at length is cast
Upon a beach hard by a sloping wood;
And therein senseless is outstretched the last
Of that gay company who had withstood
Their maddened flight; and when erewhile the
flood
Swept high the boat, all safe on this bleak shore
His life was then, although the flaming blood
Flashes no more without, as once of yore,
And faded is the radiant look that then he wore.

The storm has furrowed all his brow with lines,
Dulled with a frosty touch the gleaming hair ;
The golden fringed lids no wakeful signs
Disclose ; his aspect such as death might wear ;
The russet leaves float on the buoyant air,
And sport about his face—ah ! who can tell
What sense a message to his heart doth bear ;
What quickened pulse the wanness doth dispel,
When sounds so faint aloft that strangely singing
bell?

*The love, that knew one blissful life
In Heaven's fair courts afar,
Need fear no pains of earthly strife
Its loyal faith can mar.*

*The love, that waits true life eterne,
For loss need never weep,
If still the grievèd heart's concern
Is truly troth to keep.*

He lifts his drooping head and turns his gaze
Toward the light that upward floods the grove ;
Through scattered clouds the sun's last farewell
rays

A glory make ; and in the midst above,
One, like a spirit luminous, doth move,
Encircled by the gold and vermeil hues
That hide the waning time, as if to prove
That some bright creature here the glow renews,
Which the dull earth in yon departing orb must
lose.

Lo ! down the way embowered in hemlock shade,
O'erarched by darkling boughs of gaudy trees,
Along the ghostly shadows lengthening laid,
As though the angels waited her decrees,
Coming in joy, the peerless one he sees.
No starry orbs have light like her serene ;
Before her smile's salute all evil flees ;
Her very raiment hath a heavenly sheen,
Steeped fresh in odors, bearing healing balms un-
seen.

She comes, the haunting vision of his youth,
The matchless Lady of his treasured dream ;
So silent, fleet, her steps of tender ruth,
Most piteous deeds I ween would her beseem ;
Much more her long-lost love she should redeem.
He swoons from rapturous pain ; and though
 untried
Her pliant frame, with sudden power supreme,
She lifts and bears him where not far beside
A sheltered nook, a wingèd shallop waits the fateful
 tide.

So gently laid she him ; kind rest thus given
The bruised limbs so soothèd there his pain,
That the sealed eyes open beneath the heaven
Of her sweet graciousness ; then when she fain
To greet the yearning quest his looks regain,
Leans o'er the throbbing breast and meets his
 gaze,
Fondly her yielding form his arms detain ;
Lip unto lip, heart unto heart displays
The height, the depth of love, in dear and sweet amaze.

And then beyond the river's craggy lake,
Far down its seaward waves they swiftly glide ;
The opal skies new fired with flames awake,
And answering glory lights the flowing tide,
Where spreading banks in dimmer hues are dyed ;
Midway a circling heaven ; in sweet content
The wedded souls would ever there abide ;
A transient gift the beauteous scene is sent ;
The splendor vanishes, the love for aye is meant.

So fades the round of yon effulgent West ;
The dusky earth in halcyon slumber lies ;
The river meets the sea and sinks to rest ;
Between two isles, and where the twilight dies,
The blessed gate of night wide open flies
And shuts the Pilgrim Pair from our dim sight.
The heavens now glad uncloseth their starry eyes,
Mute Nature now annuls her ancient right
Of silence drear, and song outbreaks from thronèd
height:

Urania Sings.

O sacred love ! O fair and fond !
Thou hast thy victory won ;
Earth safely binds the riven bond,
And all her work is done.

The Starry Choir replies.

To yon far life they joyous float,
With boat and wing have crossed
The sea, the sky, the star remote,
And both in one are lost.

THE MOUNTAIN SHRINE.

AN IDYLL.

Socrates. "Were we not saying that the soul too is then dragged by the body into the region of the changeable, and wanders and is confused ; the world spins around her and she is like a drunkard under their influence ? But when returning into herself she reflects, then she passes into the realm of purity, and eternity, and immortality and unchangeableness, which are her kindred and with them she ever lives when she is by herself, and is not let or hindered ; then she ceases from her erring ways, and being in communion with the unchanging, is unchanging. And this state of the soul is called wisdom."

. . . . "She will not ask philosophy to release her, in order that when released she may deliver herself up again to the thralldom of pleasures and pains, doing a work only to be undone again, weaving instead of unweaving her Penelope's web. But she will make herself a calm of passion and follow reason and dwell in her, beholding the true and divine (which is not matter of opinion), and thence derive nourishment. Thus she seeks to live while she lives, and after death she hopes to go to her own kindred and be freed from human ills."

From the Phædo of Plato.

Jowett's translation.

PILGRIM.



THOU ! who turnest with a look as blank
As were a bladeless sheath, tarnished and
worn,

Toward yon sloping path, why is thy garb
Of beauty reft, or strangely cast aside ?
Tell me, sweet maid, thy sad, melodious tale.

MAIDEN.

Ah ! sir, I mourn a loss where love is nought.
Had but the form of my dead loss remained
To wait a soul's return, this world the stone
Sealing his sepulchre, I here would sit ;
Nor time, nor hunger's pangs, nor flaming sword
Of angel drive me hence, until my lord
Should issue forth to answer my shrill call.

PILGRIM.

Thy tale, sweet maid, thy sad, melodious tale,
Under the hemlock shade ; this outward height
O'erlooking here the fair familiar land
Will give us rest ; see how the golden air

Tints the dull pall of life's approaching bier ;
Night takes the torch from day's departing orb ;
Slowly the earth's rich harvest homeward wends,
And peace unlocks the prison gates of pain ;
Tell me, sweet maid, thy sad, melodious tale.

MAIDEN.

How hard it is to tell of love pressed back
Upon the living heart, and of the wreck
That brought this woe ! This is my dolorous strain.

PILGRIM.

The plummy fern, that countless years of old
Perished in central depths of jetty ore,
Guessed not its fate might haply be, afar
To fill with glowing warmth a bridal hearth.
So love, down-trod and fused with tears on earth,
May die to light a paradise beyond ;
Tell me, sweet maid, thy sad, melodious tale.

MAIDEN.

For me a paradise ? ah ! not for me.

But now, I pray, since what thou ask'st is dear,
Avert thine eyes while I attempt my theme.
Surely an angel passed this way and laid
His hand upon my brow and stilled its throb,
Or else cherubic wings enfold me here;
For to thy voice faint echoes answer now
Amid the ruins of my heart; thy face
Yields to a face, methinks, I knew long since,
Of one, who e'en up to the throne of God
Would lead my soul. He meeting me, who once
Was called fair Marianne, where a far hill
With sliding step reaches a floor-like vale
And fronts a circling height, there welcomed me.
The blush of maiden spring suffused the land,
Unclothed as yet with verdured loveliness;
And here at first with thought intent to hunt,
Through wood and glade, the bloom of meeting
climes,
The garden's birth to hail or pristine bird,
I learned to love the spirit's youthful flight,
Borne as it were on hardier wing aloft.
As generous as a stream from cloud-girt fount,

That takes, on its swift way, a lowly brook,
And gifts the lesser wave with power to spring,
In feathery curves, to his high source, was this
My friend ; though crowned with snow like his own
 heights,

Upon his wintry face a nearer heaven
Serenely shone, and in the deepened eyes
A primal glow with gathered shades of thought
Was blent ; what though his voice no longer rang
With equal tone, still on mine ear it broke
Harmonious as a chime and changeful peal,
When lightly from his lips remembered notes
Of many-tuned imperial singers fell.
In converse thus, through fairest realms of lore,
Day followed day, bud unto leaf and flower
Came, and in that procession sweet, to me
Unfolding life ; and e'en retracing now
The lost bright hours, my spirit dimly knows
An onward throe.

 So where the river cuts
Lengthwise the plain, along its meadowed marge,

By stately sentinels of elms we strayed,
Until the sun his scythe-like beams sent forth
And swept the waving meads; we then, that feared
His might, willingly sought the leafy shades,
Such as below this airy height restrain
The glaring fields and tempt to pensive walk.
Cool depths allured, with shuddering fall and lull,
Of rock-divided, meeting waves; the path
That winding now, now upward gliding, ever
Cheating reluctant feet, a tent-door showed
Of parted boughs, and thence beneath outspread
The glowing busy world; convenient props were
there

Of shapen trees and stones for restful seat;
Here curtained in dark leaves, a twilight mood
Upon us fell; one mused or careless gazed
Outlooking, but soon to the other, calm
In silence merged, silence in unwatched sleep,
My dear friend slept, the sleep of wearied steps.
But I—

PILGRIM.

But thou, as if guarding alone

A holy gate, seest approaching thee
A friend, who asks the opening key ; yet him
Thou answer'st not, but stoop'st to gather flowers,
Thrown there—who knows ? perchance thrown there
—ah ! no.
Thy tale, sweet maid, thy sad, melodious tale.

MAIDEN.

Were I a veiled nun and thy barred face
In darkness set, how light a task to tell
My tale !—And so—the welling fount of youth
Needing no pause to garner wasteful store,
But rather spending ere the fount were full—
I could not brook the whelming hush around,
But turned a greeting look abroad and hoped
For answer meet ; a breathing fragrance gave
The sole response ; the odorous sigh of some
Fair floral thing, calling for near caress,
Methought ; and this I sought, nor waited long.
The sweet breath led me on ; “ The flowers,” I said,
“ Have hid away, the truant wind but goes
Before,” yet flowers none were anywhere.

Then suddenly, as if the wind had swept
A lyre, was heard a low aërial song :

*O Marianne ! fair Marianne !
Dost hear the breezes softly sigh,
The waving leaves take up the cry ?
Dost heed the breath the pine trees fan,
And flowers seek as it goes by ?
O Marianne ! fair Marianne !
Dost hear the breezes softly sigh ?*

*And yet before the wind began,
Something there was more still, more nigh,
Did sigh and cry and ask reply ;
It was a heart that led the van ;
O Marianne ! fair Marianne !
Dost hear the still heart faintly sigh ?*

Whence came and why that thrilling song ? Why now
The rapturous spring toward a promised goal,
The mute abeyance of bewildered sense ?

As when a life-long prisoned bird outbursts
Her cage, yet soon alights upon its bars
A trembling thing, that dares not any flight.
But once again I heard the rhythmic call,
The musical sweet coil around me thrown
That drew me on ; no voice from out the past
Sounded above the pleading melody ; no voice
Within was prompt to wake discordant notes.
My heart quick answered to the call, and so
I followed it unmindful of the way.
But even while the last fond strains expired
Slowly with sighs, fading away as if
Within a cave, where harmonies grow faint,
And then revive to fail and die afar,
I stood before the portal of a fane,
Shaped seemingly by Nature's mystic hand,
A porch with woodbine overgrown, and still
Part of the mountain-side ; symmetric lines
Converging to a dome were hid in leaves,
But showing underneath the woven green,
What might be crystal by its various light,
So skilfully disposed the hues, the shape,

Irreverent eyes might pass and nought discern.
Yet here to me a shrine was now disclosed,
The temple of an undiscovered power,
Perchance the source of yon enchanting lay.
I entered in, no soil of earthly wear
Upon my feet, as virginal my heart
As though a vail of heavenly woof adorned
My head, ushered into a presence thus,
Glory within glory and I enclosed ;
And while the splendor held me in its mesh,
Blind Hope with tools of fire was there to play
Upon the silent pulses of my life.
Then did the conscious air a wondrous thing
Reveal, that spanned the distance with a look
From eager, smiling eyes ; the mouth a bow
Relaxed, as if its ringing shaft had sped ;
The white hand void of lines in welcome raised,
Joined to a form, self-poised in steadfast power ;
And all suffused with a pervasive charm,
Fresh as it were from Heaven's creative hand,
But a creation fuller, more divine,
Than aught this world had harbored here till now.

Scarce can my failing sense these scanty traits
Recall, immersed in deepening length of gloom.
I pray thee fill the vacant round with what
Were best and fairest in thy rich surmise,
And thou hast him portrayed who took from me
The lordship of my heart. Not strange it seemed
The amorous crystal air should hold him clasped
Unyielding in its grasp, he moved not thence,
But like a charmèd captive still appeared
Eager to leave the cold stiff height and come.
Nor wonder thou, that spell-bound I should gaze
Upon a face of such imperial power,
Gaze till the full nobility had stored
The ready mould within my passive soul.
Yet to the rounding of the perfect form,
I looked on that high grace and person fair.
Meanwhile a voiceless song to speechless words
Was set, whereto my heart's short gamut moved
A few unchanging notes in changeful chords :

I would that wisdom here might pass and might,
Clothed in the lineaments of peerless men,

That I might choose with whom to wed, and then
Apart should stand one, whom, as to the light,
I turn, unmarked, unknown, yet in my sight
A crownèd king ; beheld I ne'er again
Splendor and power, what loss were this, if when
He claimed my troth, he did my love requite.
Again if he must here a prisoner stay,
Unless there came to him a swift release
Would I outdo all others in the strife ;
And what were highest fame and sweetest ease
Unshared, if he with faithful love should say,
"Thou, thou alone canst fill with joy my life ?"

This music stirred my being's inmost depths ;
On a belovèd one its waves must break,
But he ne'er moved nor uttered aught, but held
His winning look, his calm majestic front.
"It is," I said, "yon cruel loving air
Detains him thus ; let me but hide without,
Surely it will release its jealous clasp,
Or else some magic must undo this spell."
And to the threshold of the sacred shrine

I turned, the dear succession of sweet notes
Sweeping my spirit's hidden strings,
In change and counterchange the self-same words,
Until above the palpitating strains,
Awoke once more that tender echoing call.
While yet the sound, vibrated on mine ear,
I entered joyously the holy place ;
Ah ! holy place no more—the splendor gone—
Fled all the glory and the vision—where ?
My outstretched hands encountered frigid light,
Framed as it seemed, hard, featureless, and blank ,
A pale, sad ray behind the crystal space,
And there a form in unresponsive clay,
The strange similitude, in every line,
Of him I worshipped in his transient prime.
A marble image held my soul enclosed,
And, as through utmost bale it gazed without,
The cold dumb statue slowly fell apart
And crumbled into shapeless dust. Then gloom
As of a sunless year encompassed me,
And midmost in an orb of empty hours
I stood, until I heard thy kindly voice.

PILGRIM.

I pray thee, when the arid summer moon
Throws on the sea a moving continent
Of crimped light and unsubstantial gold,
Should one deceived plunge into the black
Oblivious deep, and bury there his loss?
Yet thou, when first upon the mirroring sea
Of thy young imagining did strangely fall
A passing show of earthly grace, wouldst sink
Bereft under a dark unfathomed grief.
Stand thou not thus, dear maid, in dull despair;
This germ of love, of its unvalued husk
Despoiled, can upspring into wide-wings
Not uncompanioned and bear thee forth
Unto the very stream of onward life,
That issues from the Empyréan Throne.


MAIDEN.

Ah ! now I know that heavenward face and true ;
Again I hear the many-sounding voice
Of old ; see I not there our golden vale ?
All, all return, the dear, the fair, save one.
Lead thou me on, and yet—and yet—alas !

KING SIGMUND'S WOE.

A BALLAD.

Recast from an incident in William Morris's Sigurd the Volsung.

 HERE earth and skies are northward,
Upsprung the Volsung race ;
There seas and frosty mountains,
Held it in rude embrace ;
A mighty prince among them
Was Sigmund, brave and strong,
But forced to live an alien,
Because of treacherous wrong.

When years had brought him power
And wealth of kingly kind,
He left his dreary exile,
His own again to find ;

Left all his foes defeated,
And fled the foreign land,
And with a Wildwood foundling,
He sought his native strand.

A son, this Wildwood foundling,
His own and fondly dear ;
In all his crafts and prowess,
Did he the stripling rear ;
Reared him to face such danger
As strength alone might dare ;
Him, ah ! he could not dower
Against the venom'd snare.

Their king his people welcomed ;
He wore his father's crown,
And soon was there beside him
A queen of fair renown ;
Sweet peace and every blessing
Did Sigmund's wrongs requite ;
Reward awaited valor,
And right was met by right.

But soon beneath the roof-tree,
He felt the serpent's fangs ;
Its horrid length unwinding
To coil with deadly fangs ;
The Queen a hate had nourished
For that dear Wildwood son,
Whose deeds of bold achievement
A world-wide fame had won.

One eve, when russet Autumn
Had garnered all his store,
When feast and friendly greeting
Flung wide the generous door,
The Queen, gold-clad and beauteous,
The royal board did grace,
And served the brimming beaker
With fair and smiling face.

“ O son ! take thou the wine-cup
I give with loving hand.”
Her guileless words were spoken
In tones of soft command.

He took the proffered wine-cup
And therein gazèd long ;
On gathered toil he pondered,
And wrong that weds with wrong.

His father next beside him
Did urge his brooding son :
“What evil holds thee speechless,
What thought hath thirst forerun?”
“Hate fills the golden wine-cup,
The dregs therein I see.”
“I’ll drink the hateful potion,”
Said Sigmund fearlessly.

For venom-proof was Sigmund,
He drained the cup unharmed ;
Up-woke at once the harp-strings,
His heart from care was charmed ;
He drank the wine of King-folk,
In song their deeds were told,
Glad was the soul of Sigmund,
No care his heart could hold.

The Queen, gold-clad and beauteous,
 A second cup did bring ;
She stood with gracious presence
 Before the prince and king ;
A golden beaker carried
 In hands of snowy white,
And spake with honied accents
 To that unwilling knight :

“ O son ! hast proved the wine-cup
 I offered thee but now ?
Could hate with it be mingled
 For one so brave as thou ?
Drink then this cup I offer,
 A philter sweet distilled ;
No hate is in my bosom,
 My heart with love is filled.”

He took the loving wine-cup,
 And o'er it brooded long,
On coming labor pondered,
 And wrong that mendeth wrong ;

His father next beside him
Did urge his laggard son :
“ The earls of men are merry ;
With care I pray be done.”

He held the brimming beaker,
And in it still did gaze :
“ Here deathly snare is hidden,
I see its evil maze.”
“ See there whate’er thou willest,
And give the cup to me,
I’ll drink the snareful potion,”
Said Sigmund fearlessly.

For venom-proof was Sigmund ;
He drained the cup unharmed.
Up-woke again the harp-strings,
His heart from care was charmed ;
He drank the wine of King-folk,
In song their deeds were told ;
Secure the soul of Sigmund,
No care his heart could hold.

The Queen, gold-clad and beauteous,
Once more the cup did bring ;
Stood forth with haughty bearing
Before the prince and king ;
A golden beaker carried
In hands of snowy white,
And spake with scornful accents
To that discourteous knight :

“ How false are all the singers
That vaunt in every land
Thy deeds of splendid daring,
The ills thou canst withstand !
For death thou surely fearest,
And fain wouldst live for aye ;
Else why shunn’st thou the wine-cup
Its loving cheer decry ? ”

Then from her pallid fingers
He took the proffered wine,
And looked within the beaker,
As if for treacherous sign ;

And as he grasped it firmly,
O'er it he pondered long
On toil that toil begetteth,
On wrong that beareth wrong.

The King turned there about him :
" O ! son, what aileth thee ?
Ne'er shall our days be merry,
From travail ne'er be free ? "
His son did sternly answer,
As in the cup he gazed,
" Death waiteth in the wine-cup,"
He said, no whit amazed.

Now Sigmund's soul was steepèd
In dreamy wine and song ;
Within, the shouting people,
The mirth of all the throng ;
Without, the waving tree-boughs,
The wild-wind's ceaseless sound ;
The hoary years were on him,
He would a rest were found.

“Drink, son, the blissful wine-cup ;
Thy lip let death outstrain.”
Thus cried the weary Sigmund,
Nor cried he thus in vain.
Sinfiotli laughing answered :
“I’ll drink to Odin then,
And dwellers up in Valhal,
That hold the lives of men.”

He drank the fateful wine-cup ;
Its work was quickly done.
Prone on the floor was fallen
The Volsung’s noble son ;
The ancient roof-tree trembled
Throughout the lordly hall ;
Men’s hearts with grief were stricken,
That saw the mighty fall.

No word in death he uttered,
No change was in his look ;
He bore his passing bravely,
As he no fear did brook ;

But still the air was parted
By one swift piercing cry ;
'Twas Sigmund's sudden waking
To see the Volsung die.

The lifeless head he lifted
And o'er him palsied bent ;
So heart-deep was his sorrow,
None gazed on his lament ;
As Odin over Baldur,
None durst on him intrude,
Alone as in the Wildwood,
Amid that multitude.

Then from the floor he raised him,
And laid him on his breast,
Toward the doorway hastened,
And told to none his quest ;
The night-wind's sweep was wrathful,
The clouds were piled on high,
The moon with shattered lances
Broke through the serried sky.

Thus with his sorrow laden,
 He passed from out men's sight ;
Beyond their happy dwellings,
 He held his ghostly flight.
He trod the dreary thicket,
 The wind's last refuge faced,
Along the foot of mountains,
 Through dales of deer unchased.

Crossed here his path a river ;
 A swirling flood it seemed,
Nor any helpful ferry
 His weary steps redeemed.
Still by its side he hastened,
 As one that something sought,
Unmindful of the travail,
 By which his way was fought.

He bore his Wildwood darling
 Close pressed upon his breast.
The ebon night grew moonless,
 No dawn broke in the east ;

The footprints of his anguish
Marked all the untrod way ;
A desert plain he entered
Before the gleaming day.

He still the river followed,
That widened toward a sea,
When o'er it came a glimmer
Ere yet the dawn could be ;
The sound of keel-cleft waters
Next broke upon his ear ;
He paused beside the whirl-tide
To see what now drew near.

A white-winged boat before him
Ran lightly on the strand ;
And there a mighty Captain,
Grey-clad like mountain land,
One-eyed and seeming ancient,
He hailed the laden King :
“ O ! whither now, King Sigmund ?
How far doth night thee bring ? ”

“I seek across these waters
To gain the farther shore,
Perchance to win new kingship,
For here is life no more.”
“Lay thou thy load on shipboard,
The night soon greets the day ;
My senders bade me ferry
A great King on his way.”

King Sigmund did his bidding ;
His son on board he laid,
And next himself would follow,
When he was strangely stayed—
Nor boat nor man were waiting,
Nor son was on his breast ;
He scanned the empty waters,
Now here—now there his quest,


Till o'er the inky wavelets
A morning shimmer crept.
Then Sigmund turned him homeward,
And on his way he kept,

And ere the sunny noontide
 Upon his throne was set,
No queen was there beside him,
 No joy nor feast was yet,

But deeds to do all kingly,
 In war-fields fame to win,
Until the mighty Odin
 Reft 'mid the battle's din
The flaming sword of Sigmund ;
 And from the fore-front grim,
To God home went great Sigmund,
 Where one awaited him.

THE SEA SWALLOW OF WODEN'S HOLL.

A BALLAD.

 MAID that dwelt upon the shore,
The splintered shore of Mavis Sound,
Once heard above the sea's dull roar
A strain that winded round and round,
And ever onward, inward bound.
Sweeping the sky within her range,
A circling form her eyes soon found,
Which cleft the air so darkly strange,
The wondrous bird of Woden's Holl.

She oft had paused beside a stone,
Graven with letters old and worn,
Many a day and all alone,
Early and late, at eve and morn,
Such days as were of summer born,

To ponder o'er a curious rune,
But never yet was she o'erborne
By sight like this that day of June,
Which brought the bird of Woden's Holl.

The stone upon a hillside lay,
That sloped toward a southern sea ;
Westward there stretched an inland bay,
And from broad ocean on the lee
The freshened sun rose gloriously.

There sat the maid and sang a song
Learned late of Northern Minstrelsy ;
Each note she heard a cry prolong,
It was that bird of Woden's Holl :

*O ! would I were a swallow ;
My true love I would follow,
And follow, follow him.
Away would flee my sorrow,
Could I my love now follow,
And follow, follow him.*

*I'd wing the sea's wide hollow,
And leave all else to follow,
To follow, follow him.*

When on her lips the last words ceased,
The bird upon the stone had lit ;
A tear each brimming sluice released,
Nor did its gaze her face once quit,
But searching there it dared to sit.

Filled then her eyes with tearful dew,
As if her heart thereto were knit,
Before the mystery she knew
Of that strange bird of Woden's Holl.

She now essayed the song again,
But trembling seized the feathered thing.
Her voice sent forth its notes in vain ;
She could no more the ditty sing,
But sought to take the tenderling
In her warm palms and comfort give.
The bird outstretched an upward wing,
Quailing sad sounds and fugitive,
That wondrous bird of Woden's Holl.

The maid's soft heart was quite unstrung ;
She loved all dumb and piteous kind ;
By this her inmost soul was wrung,
And thus she cried : " Where shall I find
Some clue this sorrow will unwind,
And whence has come the mystic chance
Its fate with mine has intertwined ?
O ! let me seek deliverance
For this sad bird of Woden's Holl."

Downward she turned to leave the hill,
Nor looked far glancing o'er the sheen
Of islanded blue waters still,
Beneath an orient sun ; between
Two headlands hard by swathed in green,
A harbor lay smooth as a mere.
She heeded not the beauteous scene ;
The wail and circling flight were near
Of that strange bird of Woden's Holl.

And if she missed this vision fair,
A stranger bark she missed no less,

Rigged in a fashion old and rare,
 Havened erewhile and tenantless ;
And one that wore an ancient dress,
 Taking a path that upward led,
To meet her in her new distress,
 Her and the fleeting one o'erhead,
That wondrous bird of Woden's Holl.

A cloud-like hood half hid his face,
 Cloaked was his form in grey disguise,
And yet his words had sweetest grace,
 While thus he spoke in foreign wise :
"Return, dear maid, where yon stone lies,
 And I its history will tell ;
The rune for thee shall yield a prize,
 And so reveal the wizard spell
Of that strange bird of Woden's Holl."

"Here Viking Sigurd left his life,
 When on his dragon-ship he came ;
Far was the Frost Giant's deadly strife,
 Near was his love's undying flame.

He came to seek Valhalla fame,
Or finding else a golden land,
Wrest from its fruits a noble name,
And claim by right, fair Ragnhild's hand.

“She in sky-piercing strains meanwhile
Craved of the Fates a swift decree,
That she might fly the ice-clad isle ;
A swallow fleet she asked to be,
And follow Sigurd o'er the sea.

Sadly the Norns allowed her prayer ;
She spread wide wings that waving free
Near Sigurd's bark soon beat the air.

“Seest thou yon isle,—the headlands here ?
There Sigurd passed, and here his feet
Touched first the joyous ground ; no fear
Surprised his soul, but hope to greet
The summer land at this dear seat ;
But alien barb swift pierced his heart,
And here is carvèd his defeat,
While she long waits death's vengeless dart,
The wondrous bird of Woden's Holl.”

SONNETS.

TWO SONNETS.

IN MEMORIAM

F. D.

I.

WHAT vision meets thy wonder-gazing eyes
Upon the cloudy Pisgah heights of death?
Seest thou the fair familiar home beneath
In dewy garb, jewelled by Orient skies?
Or doth a wondrous sea thy sight surprise,
And spectre bark await thy parting breath?
Stands there the master mute and beckoneth
To bear thee where the far shore gleaming lies?
Or doth the echoing air thy soul amaze,
Wafting melodious strains from answering choirs
Of voices dear, along thy heart's full strings?
But whether sight or sound thy spirit stays,
In sleep the Night of time and pain expires,
And Death the gates of day wide open swings.

II.

FILL thou wast laid within thy kindred earth,
The harrowed ground, which pains like
thine assail,
Did not its vernal glory glad unvail,
But sadly maskèd life with seeming dearth.
In tears they bear thee from thy widowed hearth,
And weeping skies thy open grave bewail ;
Then when the baptized earth thy form doth hail,
Long waiting life has sudden beauteous birth.
With rapturous Spring thy raptured soul doth rise ;
The plough, the harrow, which the soil did bear,
Lend but fresh marvel to its verdant dress ;
O thou ! as racked with throes and long distress,
As true, as bountiful in others' wear,
Thus too thy soul attains its glorious guise.

IN MEMORIAM—

———With thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery wheelèd throne,
The cherub Contemplation.

Milton. Il Penseroso.

FOR one brief hour I felt the full impress,
As of a cherub's might, who here was sent,
To ponder, not to know his work's intent,
His past bright lot, the crown of blessedness
In store, steeped all in sweet forgetfulness,
Lest to his mission lost in sad lament
Of home, or of its joys so eloquent,
That we, enrapt, should miss the daily stress.
So thou cherubic soul—thou lovedst while here
To search, to meditate, but not to act ;
Returning with thine hoard thou serv'st anew
The God thou didst in his great laws revere.
There may'st thou, amidst the proof of glorious
fact,
In converse high new realms of thought subdue !

A TALE IN TWO SONNETS.


I.

THE REASONING.

LOVE her well ; the glow of her true heart
Kindles a fireside flame within my own ;
Her soul completing mine with powers unknown
Before, I soon have gained a long-sought art,
Or depths of thought no sage could e'er impart.
Borne on her soul's fair plumes till wings have
grown
Near by my heart, my spirit since has flown
With hers above the world's vain, dusky mart.
But what if these were moods of transient stay ?
What if the twin-bound life should bear a weight,
Or that the unshared fate have joys instead ?
To troops of friends I need no fitting mate ;
Nought hinders me to join their rich array,
Ah me ! unless that I should with her wed.

II.

THE RETROSPECT.

ND pondering thus, the fateful tide swept by.
Then languor fell upon her like a vail
Of palest woof, and though she did not fail
To give of her sweet store, yet whene'er I
Took of the full hoard, blight would on it lie,
As on hid manna in the Sacred tale.
Henceforth no work of mine did e'er avail,
As if my life did want for some supply ;
And friends, that once had praised my gracious arts,
Fell from me like the leaves blown rudely down
From hoary trees. O ! well may I repine,
To find too late no joys for severed hearts.
Better the double life, the cross, the crown ;
Alas ! what would I now, if she were mine ?

A DREAM.

LIKE a wild bird one hath ensnared, in vain
I beat the prison bars of sordid care.
“O sweet escape to wing the buoyant air,
By one glad flight yon azure calm attain,”
I cried till sleep o’erpowered my sad refrain.
In dreams now borne I know not how nor where,
I reached the portals of a cave which there
Uprose, and whence I must an outlet gain,
When first among a waiting band I hailed
One long beloved, whose strong hand firm I
grasped
And passed into a marble-depth of night ;
An arm unknown my shrinking form enclasped,
And o’er my fears these gracious words pre-
vailed :
“Who first the dark hath met, sees first the
light.”

A CHANCE MEETING.

I WAS strange when first I met thy sudden face
In June ; when June held nothing sweet for me,
I mused, there flashed a radiant look from thee
That said, "I knew thee in some starry place."
I, through the strain of my long tested race,
On this sad course forgetful, could not see
With thy clear light. But soon the mystery
Dissolved ; I too once loved thy spirit's grace.
Thou later from the heavenly home couldst steep
Thine eyes in its divinest memories,
Revealing them to me in that one glance ;
I earlier at the happy goal will keep
That meaning look apart, whatever chance
Intrude, and greet thee first in Paradise.

LOVE'S CHOICE.

WITH voiceless love her sad appeal she made,
E'en pleading words to him she did address :
“ Dear heart,” she sighed, “ true love hath power
to bless,
Till waning stars in far-off azure fade.”
No quickened pulse his listening heart betrayed,
Nor changing look the echo did confess
Of her fond sigh, but from her dear distress
He captive turned, by earth's dull joys waylaid.
A voice divine her fainting steps would guide :
“ True love immortal is ; from star to star
Of rapturous life two wedded souls may speed ;
Infinite Love yet far beyond doth lead,
And high in Heaven's calm noon its dwellings
are.”
“ In starry worlds,” she said, “ I would abide.”

SLEEP AND DEATH.



FT see we in the garish round of day
A danger-haunted world for our sad feet,
Or fear we tread along the peopled street
A homeless path, an unaccompanied way.
So too the night doth bring its own array
Of darkling terrors we must singly meet,
Each soul apart in its unknown retreat,
With life a purposeless, unconscious play.
But though the day discovers us afraid,
Unsure of some safe hand to be our guide,
Rest we at night, as if for each were said,
“He giveth unto His belovèd sleep.”
Nought less than all do we in sleep confide,
And death but needs of us a trust as deep.

TO AN ISLAND.



ISLE ! thou surely wast a mermaid gay,
Else, prithee, why those wavy, wanton wiles,
Coquetting with the main by beckoning miles
Of grassy downs, smooth beach, and tempting
bay?

Anon thou turn'st so bent to flirt alway
To that stern Triton, whom no charm beguiles,
But roarings loud returns for thy false smiles,
And woeful wrecks along thy coast doth lay.
A band of pearl-like lakes thy beauteous zone ;
But neither flowers nor fruitful vines thy crown,
Nor trees for pairing birds, nor dewy shade
Where browsing kine repose. One home alone
Thy bounds enclose, and all thy shores adown,
Illusive, fruitless, tempest-tost are made.

A FAIR SYMPHONY.

To E. C. W.



HOW sweet, when sound accords with sound so
well,

One finds them wrought into a tuneful chain,
A symphony that circles in the brain,
And winds about the heart a magic spell ;
And entering too the spirit's voiceless cell,
Wakes unexpectant there an answering strain,
As when, struck by the breeze's soft refrain,
Strings move that music else would never swell !
Such harmony thy presence brings to me,
Gifts with a voice the unaccustomed word,
And tunes my soul to thy sweet mystery.
I questioned this and guessed the charm divine ;
A unity of word and deed is thine,
And beauty links them aye in many a chord.

BY-GONES.

SEE, where a gossamer nets all the grass
Invisibly ; such skill of wingèd threads,
That slender lines abroad are cast, and pass

From leaf to leaf ; while thus a tangle weds,
Quickly as in a mystery, plant to plant,
Awaking morn the tissue soon o'erspreads

With spherèd light. Its gentle visitant,
The wind, breaks not the intermingled chain,
Nor yet its hold the ruder showers displant.


Since then, if these their wilful might restrain,
To spare th' etherial thing, how rough the feet,
That with their hasty steps of cold disdain

Brush ruthlessly the gemmy tracery sweet
Away from clinging stems, that it afar
Is blown to some unsearchable retreat,

Or gone, perchance, as airy nothings are,
Or viewless sympathies that bind us soul
To soul, which the rough world is fain to mar !

Where borne are such dear shreds? To any goal?

THE VISION.

LOW wanes the hour that brings the day to
night,

And far the love that makes a long delay ;
Quick beats the heart that nears a cruel plight,

And light the step that leads a maid astray.
She sleeps, so sweet the shade, all ill unseen ;
She sleeps nor knows the helpful night from day.

A widening world doth sadly intervene
Between the lady and her heart's true stay ;
Nor piteous looks nor words can pierce the screen.


Still on the stealthy lover comes away ;
She sleeps despite the bale, despite the strain,
Sleeps—sleeps — nor knows the helpful night from
day.

Leaves now her soul its wearied home of pain,
And to a dear familiar spot it flits ;
It cometh not nor enters there in vain.

Within a window bay her true love sits ;
He bends on her his stern and sorrowed eyes,
Nor more—her heart no further wrong commits.

Yet he the mission strange did ne'er surmise ;
For 'twas his inmost self, in angel-wise.

THE FOG BELL.

EAR not the cloud-tent of the sky ;
The gloom that blinds the starless eye,
The mist that dares yon light defy,
Fear not, fear not, for all is well.
Dash thy rude waves upon the shore,
Vain Ocean ; vent thy vengeless roar,
With night and danger darkened o'er,
When Nobska wakes her watchful bell.

Hark now where comes a piping note
No sound from any mortal throat,
No horn on fabled lips remote ;
Fear not, fear not, for all is well.
The Genius of the earth is there—
Water and fire and plying air,
Inventive thought and human care—
And speaks to Nobska's watchful bell.


TO A SUMMER FLEET.



YE ! that plough the fenceless sea,
Nor reap of its fertility,
And leave its fields of furrows free,
Ye ships in shadow and light displayed

Dearer to me the portioned land,
The toil beneath a hard command,
And ruin e'en by human hand,
O ships, in shadow and light that fade.

A SONG OF SORROW.

 AINT were the songs I sang you Christmas
morn

Amid the blast;
No more from me melodious carols rose,
As in the past.

The merry chimes, that rang the New Year in,
Mute have now grown ;
No cords responsive to the joyous peal
Prolong the tone.

The frosty earth hangs in an ebon vault,
Wild is the night,
The blinding storm blots out the beacon stars ;
I grope for light.

Moves then the sun athwart the nether gloom,
Bringing the day ?
Perchance his chariot wheels are clogged with clouds
That block the way.

My stricken soul breaks out in plaintive moan :

“Come, Death!”—I cry.

“Not Death, but Life,” a sweet and piteous voice

Gives me reply.

“Dear heart, the sighs that wing thy bruised soul

Are more than song;

The sigh, the tear, the suppliant knee are boons,

For which I long.

I guide the storm and walk the vengeful wave,

That these may be.

Breaks now the dawn along the eastern sky;

Rest thou in me !”

ROUNDELAYS AND VERSES

ADDRESSED TO

Y O U N G F R I E N D S .

A LOVER'S LADDER.

ARGUMENT.

He evokes Love :

I. Rondeau : "Awake sweet Love."

Love arises.

II. Rondel : "When love is in her eyes."

He crowns his love.

III. Rondeau : "All fruits of Spring."

He tells how she excels.

IV. Song : "No tones of any tuneful bird."

He tells how through her he conquers.

V. Rondel : "No Siren couched in flowers."

The Union.

VI. Song : "O ! could I with my true love float."

I. RONDEAU.



WAKE, sweet Love, and with the Spring,
Thy bandaged eyes uncovering,
Deck thou thyself in charms anew ;
Thy pinions take their fairest hue,
And with thee joys in plenty bring,

But not of cruel darts a string,
Whose barbs are tipped with direful sting ;
From beds of heart's ease gemmed with dew,
Awake sweet Love !


Be not of covert arts the king,
Nor sport thou more on restless wing,
That maids may be forever true,
And youths their homage brave renew,
And hail thee with the flowering,
Awake sweet Love !

II. RONDEL.

WHEN love is in her eyes,
What need of Spring for me?
A brighter emerald lies
On hill and vale and lea.
The azure of the skies
Holds nought so sweet to see,
When love is in her eyes,
What need of Spring for me?

Her bloom the rose outvies,
The lily dares no plea,
The violet's glory dies,
No flower so sweet can be;
When love is in her eyes,
What need of Spring for me?

III. RONDEAU.

LL fruits of Spring, obey my call !
My love, your Queen, is on her throne.
Bring crown of flowers with dew o'er all,
Roses and lilies freshly blown,
And at her beauteous feet pour down,
All fruits of Spring !

No icy blast let her appal ;
Bid zephyrs, that are yours alone,
To waft her on, while I, her thrall,
Scatter what wilding weeds I own,
A few poor rhymes, where now ye're thrown,
All fruits of Spring !

IV. SONG.

NO tones of any tuneful bird
Can with my love's sweet voice compare ;
Æolian notes would be unheard,
If they to vie with it should dare.

Her eyes are surely liquid blue ;
They change with every passing thought ;
No star on high nor gem of dew
Such beams as hers have hither brought.


She is so deftly shaped, so light,
Her step would never crush a flower ;
She could outdo the Aphrodite,
Were crested wave her native bower.

Her soul pellucid is and true ;
It shines in every deed and word.
I see the maiden Eve anew,
Before she had the serpent heard.

All charms, all beauties hath my love ;
My heart doth sing her every grace ;
Though my dull pen devoutly strove,
It could but her fair shadow trace.

Accept this tribute then, sweet heart !
The song I bring, the song withheld,
Were they not rudely kept apart,
All poets hence would be excelled.

V. RONDEL.

O Siren couched in flowers,
That wise Odysseus braved,
Could lure me to her bowers,
 Were jewels there impaved ;
Thou on my heart hast graved
 A love all love o'erpowers,
No Siren couched in flowers,
That wise Odysseus braved.

He, bound with cords for hours,
 Had bonds more strong then craved ;
But me thou wouldst have saved
 From all her magic powers,
No Siren couched in flowers,
That wise Odysseus braved.

VI. SONG.



COULD I with my true love float
Upon a magic river,
Embarking in a wingèd boat
We'd sail forever, ever.

This busy world I'd leave behind,
Spinning in crystal azure ;
In quite another sky we'd find
A nebulous sweet leisure.

Tis said the way is strewn with stars,
That one may pick at pleasure ;
I'd set them in some golden bars,
As jewels for my treasure ;

For her I'd seize an opal cloud,
And weave a robe of splendor ;
The sun, abashed, were fain to shroud
His beams, and then surrender.

I'd skirt the walls of Paradise ;
The angels would look over,
But at the sight of her rare guise,
Their breath they'd scarce recover.

They'd fly to ope the golden gates
Hoping that she might enter.
"Ah ! no," I'd say, "far journey waits ;
We sail forever, ever."

RONDEAU.

YE foolish waves, why now so gay ?
Whither take ye your dancing way ?
Your rhythmic pace times with my oar ;
Perchance a nymph has gone ashore,
Or Galatea tempts your play.

Now Galatea, sad to say,
A giant witch'd the live-long day ;
For you she may have worse in store,
Ye foolish waves !

How now ? 'tis plain we but obey
A common spell ; I see yon spray
Just kiss her feet upon the shore ;
It is the goddess I adore.
I will outrun you ; haste away,
Ye foolish waves.

RONDEL.

AH ! wherefore shouldst thou Circe be,
Where never plant of moly grew,
Amid rich cates and honey dew ?

Such ills were ours by thy decree,
That we like victims fled from thee.

Ah ! wherefore shouldst thou Circe be,
Where never plant of moly grew ?


Extend to us then tender rue,

And from enchantment set us free ;
Give us quick wit and girlish glee,

But never aught of evil brew ;
Ah ! wherefore shouldst thou Circe be,
Where never plant of moly grew ?

RONDEAU.


TO ROSAMOND.

RT thou coquette already made
In thy two years? May I evade
The mischief of those laughing eyes,
When soft caress precedes surprise
Of sudden trick or plot well laid!

What now, what now, thou fairest maid?
I see a bow and pin displayed;
And brimful of some new device
Art thou, Coquette?

She puts a bow, with such sweet guise,
Upon me where it beautifies,
I ne'er suspect the pin inlaid,
Where pin were pain. A saucy jade,
To pin a beau in any wise,
Art thou Coquette.

A RONDEAU.

 O free to come, so fleet to go,
Is friendship armed with Cupid's bow ;
For weapons none should friendship bear
Except a shield, and eke a spear
To use upon a common foe.

But Cupid's darts dost thou not know
Against a friend thou shouldst not throw ?
With every one thou find'st a snare
So free to come.

So of such tools I pray beware,
Lest thou thy friend shouldst quickly scare.
For know thou mayst not strike as low
As Cupid when he aims his blow,
On wing so light, so debonair,
So free to come.

TO M. L. S.

STAR of the sea," " Myrrh of the sea,"
Thus they the ancient " Mary " knew.
Sweet names with sweetest things agree ;
Thou prov'st, dear maid, this saying true.

TO —


FOR J. F. D.

SOME maids are fair and some are wise,
And some are full of feeling,
But there belongs to thy soft eyes
The angelic art of healing.

Deign then to turn this way their power
And follow their sweet leading ;
For here's a Bush that bears the flower
Alas ! of " Love lies bleeding."

TO SARAH.

A VALENTINE.

AIR princess of the hillside street,
That hateful walls conceal,
The stones are weary of my feet,
Where I a joy would steal :

A joy to see thy radiant eyes
Displace the curtained glass ;
A joy to watch, in dark disguise,
Thy lagging beauty pass.

O ! would some danger threatened thee,
Where home and friends were not ;
And I by this might only be
Thy peril's counterplot !

How swiftly wert thou saved, sweet heart !
How held as ne'er before !
E'en though by this the hidden dart
Of love pierced me the more.

For ah ! a luckless stranger I,
Unworthy of thy state ;
I dare not ask a sweet reply,
To cheer my lonely fate.

No other love my heart can gauge,
If never blest by thine ;
Nor other joy the grief assuage
Of thy sad Valentine.

TO J. F. B.

A VALENTINE.



MERMAID sad
Am I, bereft of every joy.

O! I were glad,
Hadst thou ne'er been, thou heartless boy,
Who didst my tender hopes destroy.

Yet sweet the tryst,
When light replies to light and waves
By moons are kist;
Thine oar the swirling sea outbraves,
To bear me to my island caves.

Alas! one eve,
As thy swift keel yon silvery bay
Did lightly cleave,
Two forms I saw thy boat convey,
Thee, and one bright in her array.

Ah me ! I sank
Down, down under the moonless sea ;
 'Mid caverns dank
I sit in weeds and weep for thee,
And there forever more shall be
 Coralinda.
Off Naushon.

THE BARD'S LAMENT.

'**T**IS said, that ere the Muses came,
There dwelt on earth a voiceless band,
Who afterwards were so aflame,
Song kindled thence throughout the land :
“ O ! never will we toilers be,
But singers of sweet poesie.”

They sang and sang and ever sang ;
They would not drink, still less would eat,
Nor cared they for a hungry pang,
On song alone their souls were set ;
No toilers would they ever be,
But singers of sweet poesie.

How sad that e'en in times of old,
Those dear Æolic times we praise,
Such bards might not, however bold,
Live merely on a tuneful phrase,
That so they might not toilers be,
But singers of sweet poesie.

But thus it fared and soon they died.
They could not live on song alone;
They would no other food provide,
In some supernal home unknown;
Not toilers might they need to be,
But singers of sweet poesie.

Alack ! alas ! not long their stay.
Back to the earth were they returned .
As grasshoppers they made their way
By earth and heaven ungently spurned
Are they who ne'er will toilers be,
But singers aye of poesie.



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